

How to Make and Use a Foil Pouch

Soil Sample Container

An inexpensive alternative to soil cans!

Materials:

Standard-width roll of aluminum foil (30 cm or ~11 3/4" width)
sandwich-size ziploc-type baggies (or larger)
Permanent magic marker
ruler

Procedure:

Beforehand:

1. Tear off a 25 cm (10") length of aluminum foil [Figure (a)]
2. Fold the foil in half (perpendicular to the long axis) to make a rectangle. You will have two open sides, an open top and a closed (folded) side [Figure (b)]
3. For each of the left and right open sides, fold the edges approximately 1 cm (1/2") toward the center of the rectangle. Repeat this step three more times. You now have a foil pouch with three folded sides and one open top [Figure (c)] *NOTICE: Use caution when folding; cut foil edges can be sharp and could result in cuts on fingers!*
4. Label the foil pouch as you would a soil sample can, with your name, your school's name, and a unique sample ID number, and the mass of the pouch. Later, when you collect the soil sample, you may want to label the foil pouch with the sample location name.[Figure (d)]
5. Weigh the foil pouch. Record the weight on the foil with the permanent marker pen.

In the field:

6. Fill your foil pouch 1/2 full with soil
7. Fold the top of your foil pouch approximately three times, taking care not to tear holes in the pouch [Figure (e)]
8. Place your soil-filled foil pouch into a plastic ziploc-type bag to minimize moisture loss.
9. Label your ziploc bag with the same information that is on the foil pouch
10. When you weigh your moist soil sample, note on your data sheet whether or not you weighed the sample with or without the plastic ziploc bag.

